

Veteran Employment Services Available in Northeast MO, Visits Knox Co. Courthouse to Meet with Local Veterans

By Echo Menges

It is a little-known fact that there is a veteran services program in existence, which connects discharged and retired members of the military with jobs and job training right here in Northeast Missouri.

For the past six months, a Disabled Veteran Outreach Program (DVOP) representative, Tom Christine, has been assigned to connect area veterans with job opportunities for meaningful employment. Christine specializes in helping veterans overcome tough obstacles like past incarceration and mental health setbacks after leaving the military. He is charged with connecting veterans with needed services and helping them achieve success.

Most people don't know about these services because the budget for the program, which is funded through the State, is limited and there are no funds for advertising.

Christine has been seeing limited success with available resources and doing the best he can by posting fliers and using word-of-mouth,

which is how we found out about it.

Christine is based in Kirksville, at the Department of Economic Development Division of Workforce Development, but he travels to several Northeast Missouri counties regularly to connect with veterans closer to their homes.

Christine serves all of the counties in the Northeast region and he visits several counties throughout the month. He can be found at the Scotland County Courthouse in Memphis every fourth Thursday morning, the Knox County Courthouse in Edina every fourth Thursday afternoon, the Shelbyna American Legion Hall every first Wednesday morning, and the Shelby County Courthouse in Shelbyville every first Wednesday afternoon. Christine is also available to meet by appointment by calling (660)785-2400.

"I work with veterans that have SBE, significant barrier to employment, like past incarceration, and can help with interview skills, resume writing and interview preparation," said Christine. "I work with a LVER (Local Veterans Employer

Representative), and he works with the businesses to find the jobs. We try to match certain skill sets with a job that is available."

For setbacks that don't pertain to employment, Christine can help connect veterans with other veteran service programs they might need.

"I have information to get people into contact with the right people," said Christine.

Christine has a passion for helping people. He reentered the workforce as a disabled veteran himself for this job specifically nearly three years ago. A toolmaker by trade, Christine retired from his career after 37 years.

Christine is a Vietnam Era Veteran who served in the Navy and a native of Shelby County. He also works to help inmates find services and employment when reentering society from prisons in Moberly and Bowling Green, and he is a staff member for the Drug Court and Treatment Court programs in Macon County and Shelby County.